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Message Text

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65
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

EB-07 EUR-12 AID-05 /082 W
---------- 071662
R 210820Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9481
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 0383

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SREF, PK, IN, BG
SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH NEW PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR

1. DURING HIS COURTESY CALL ON ME YESTERDAY, I ASKED PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR MOHAMMED KHURSHID WHETHER ANY STEPS WERE IN THE OFFING, NOW THAT HE HAD ARRIVED, TO SOLVE THE TWO QUESTIONS STILL OUTSTANDING BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH -- THE QUESTION OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AND THE BIHARI PROBLEM. HE SAID NO, THERE WERE NOT. HE SAID THE FIRST ISSUE THAT NEEDED TO BE DEALT WITH WAS THE RESUMPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS LINKS AND HE HAD ALREADY CONVEYED A BDG SUGGESTED DATE TO ISLAMBAD FOR CONSIDERATION. THIS WAS A SIMPLE MATTER AND REALLY ONLY REQUIRED PUSHING A BUTTON. NEXT THEY WOULD NEED TO GET STARTED ON THE RESUMPTION OF TRADE, WHICH WOULD REQUIRE AN EXCHANGE OF DELEGATIONS. SO FAR AS THE QUESTIONS OF ASSETS/LIABILITIES AND BIHARIS WERE CONCERNED, THEY HAD TAKEN THE POSITION THAT BOTH SIDES SHOULD BEGIN WITHA CLEAN SLATE. AFTER REVIEWING THE PAKISTANI VERSION OF THE BREAKDOWN OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS DURING BHUTTO'S VISIT TO DACCA, HE SAID THAT EVENTUALLY IT MIGHT WORK OUT THAT PAKISTAN OWED BANGLADESH A LITTLE SOME-THING OR THAT BANGLADESH OWED PAKISTAN A LITTLE SOMETHING; BUT PAKISTAN HAD NO MONEY TO REPAY SUCH AN OBLIGATION AND
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NEITHR DID BANGLADESH. IT SHOULD ALSO BE KEPT IN MIND WITH

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RESPECT TO THE BIHARIS, HE SAID, THAT THEY WERE FULL-FLEDGED CITIZENS OF BANGLADESH. UNLIKE THE SOVIET UNION WHICH COULD ABSORB NEW POPULATION GROUPS TO HELP DEVELOP THINLY POPULATED AREAS, PAKISTAN COULD NOT AFFORD SUCH A LUXARY AND IN ANY CASE HAD ALREADY TAKEN A LARGE NUMBER OF THE SO-CALLED BIHARIS. NONE OF HIS REMARKS ON THIS SUBJECT SUGGESTED THAT HE FORESAW PROGRESS ON THESE ISSUES AT ANY EARLY DATE.

2. I MADE THE POINT TO HIM DURING THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION THAT WE HAD USED WHATEVER CHANCE WE HAD HAD IN THE PAST TO URGE ON THE BDG THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF CONCILIATION WITH PAKISTAN AND, ESPECIALLY IN THE MORE RECENT PAST, HAD ALSO URGED THE NEED FOR A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA. AMBASSADOR KHURSHID SAID THIS WAS EXACTLY THE WAY HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT FELT. HE SAID HE HAD RESPONDED EARLIER IN THE DAY TO A VISITOR, WHO APPEARED TO THINK HIS ARRIVAL HERE WOULD SOMEHOW BE TO INDIA'S DISADVANTAGE, THAT, ON THE CONTRARY, PAKISTAN FELT THAT BANGLADESH MUST HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH INDIA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, AMBASSADORS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DACCA00383
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760023-0313
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760136/aaaabfcb.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUN 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <30 SEP 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONVERSATION WITH NEW PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR
TAGS: PFOR, SREF, PK, IN, BG, (KHURSHID, MOHAMMED)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

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